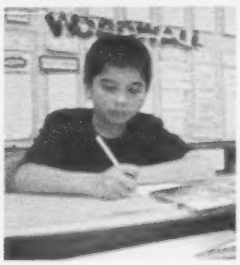
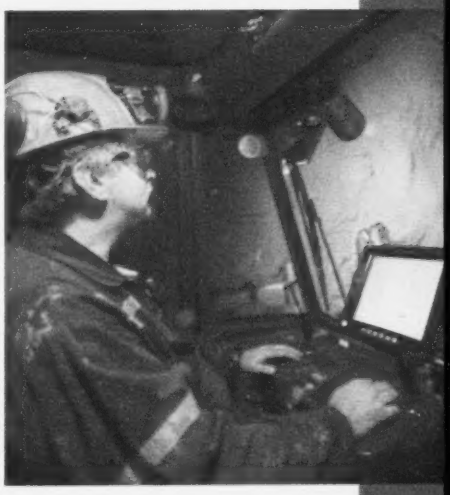
PLACES TO GROW

BETTER CHOICES. BRIGHTER FUTURE.

Growth Plan
FOR NORTHERN ONTARIO
2011





Ontario

Ministry of Infrastructure

Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry

Places to Grow

Places to Grow is the Ontario government's initiative to plan for growth in the province in a way that supports economic prosperity and achieves a high quality of life. The Places to Grow Act, 2005, provides that the Province may identify and designate growth plan areas and develop strategic growth plans for these areas. The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006, was the first growth plan released under the Act, and the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, 2011, is the second. Visit **www.ontario.ca/placestogrow** for more information.

Cover: Kapuskasing Civic Centre photo by Carmen Veilleux

Growth Plan
FOR NORTHERN ONTARIO
2011

Approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, Order-in-Council No 209/2011. The Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, 2011, was prepared and approved under the Places to Grow Act, 2005, to take effect on March 3, 2011.

Ministry of Infrastructure

Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry

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1 Context

1.1 PREAMBLE

The global economy is one of continual transformation. New markets, new technologies and new opportunities are constantly emerging. In this rapidly-changing world, regions and communities are positioning themselves for success by making better use of their existing and potential competitive advantages.

In North America, economic success is increasingly based on several key components:

- an economy that is diversified and that exemplifies a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship
- people who are healthy, educated, creative and skilled
- communities that are vibrant and attractive
- infrastructure that is modern and efficient
- an environment that is clean and healthy.

Action must be taken in all of these areas, with all orders of government and sectors of society acting together. Success in the global economy demands a broad-based strategy to address these key components in a comprehensive and co-ordinated way. That is what the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, 2011 (this Plan), sets out to do.

This Plan is in part an economic development plan, an infrastructure investment plan, a labour market plan and a land-use plan. It is a plan that recognizes the interconnected contribution of people, communities, infrastructure and the environment to a successful and sustainable economy. It is a plan that recognizes and builds upon the unique characteristics of Northern Ontario, including a bilingual workforce in many communities. It also recognizes that a successful future for Northern Ontario can only be achieved if it is built upon a new relationship and a new spirit of partnership with Aboriginal peoples.

This Plan has been developed in partnership with northerners. It is a plan that is bold and visionary, while at the same time realistic and sustainable. It focuses on ways to leverage economic, social and natural capital more strategically, and on approaches to attract a wider range of opportunities to the North. It is a plan to stimulate growth by creating a diversified northern economy, stronger communities, a healthy environment and a skilled, adaptive and innovative workforce.

Today, Northern Ontario is a key part of one of the world's leading economies. It has large areas of wealth and prosperity. Its economy is diversifying and becoming less reliant on traditional resource industries. Its people are skilled and knowledgeable. Its businesses and entrepreneurs are innovative and ready for new challenges. The process of creating a new, globally competitive region is already well underway. This is a plan to carry that effort forward over the next 25 years.

This Plan marks a new era of closer collaboration. The Province will play a leading role in realizing this Plan's vision, but the Province will not be acting alone. The residents, local governments, Aboriginal peoples, businesses and institutions of the North will be leaders in this transformation as well.

1.2 PURPOSE

This Plan has been prepared under the Places to Grow Act, 2005. The Act sets out the following purposes:

a) to enable decisions about growth to be made in ways that sustain a robust economy, build strong communities and promote a healthy environment and a culture of conservation;

b) to promote a rational and balanced approach to decisions about growth that builds on community priorities, strengths and opportunities and makes efficient use of infrastructure;

c) to enable planning for growth in a manner that reflects a broad geographical perspective and is integrated across natural and municipal boundaries;

d) to ensure that a long-term vision and long-term goals guide decision-making about growth and provide for the co-ordination of growth policies among all levels of government.

This Plan is a strategic framework that will guide decision-making and investment planning in Northern Ontario over the next 25 years. It contains policies to guide decision-making about growth that promote economic prosperity, sound environmental stewardship, and strong, sustainable communities that offer northerners a high quality of life. It also recognizes that a holistic approach is needed to plan for growth in Northern Ontario. A skilled and healthy population, modern and efficient infrastructure, and well-planned communities are critical to achieving long-term global competitiveness.

This Plan reflects a shared vision between northerners and the Government of Ontario that engages and empowers residents, businesses, institutions and communities to work together to build a stronger Northern Ontario. It takes a broad geographic perspective to support co-ordinated decision-making that respects the diverse needs of rural, urban, remote and Aboriginal communities. This Plan recognizes that to achieve these long-term goals, strategic co-ordination, partnerships and collaboration are essential. This Plan is intended to complement other provincial and regional initiatives that also contribute to the long-term sustainability and prosperity of Northern Ontario.

This Plan is structured around six theme areas: economy, people, communities, infrastructure, environment and Aboriginal peoples. Within each theme, this Plan identifies a series of policies to achieve its vision.

1.3 VISION

It is the year 2036 and there's a new Northern Ontario.

Northern Ontario has a skilled, educated, healthy and prosperous population that is supported by world-class resources, leading edge technology and modern infrastructure. Companies scan the world for opportunities to create jobs, attract investment and serve global markets.

Communities are connected to each other and the world, offering dynamic and welcoming environments that are attractive to newcomers. Municipalities, Aboriginal communities, governments and industry work together to achieve shared economic, environmental and community goals.

1.4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Delivering this Plan's vision will involve the combined efforts of governments and diverse partners across Northern Ontario, focused on six key principles:

1. Creating a highly productive region, with a diverse, globally competitive economy that offers a range of career opportunities for all residents.

2. Developing a highly educated and skilled workforce to support an evolving knowledge-based economy and excellence in the trades.

3. Partnering with Aboriginal peoples to increase educational and employment opportunities.

4. Delivering a complete network of transportation, energy, communications, social and learning infrastructure to support strong, vibrant communities.

5. Demonstrating leadership in sustainable growth and environmental management.

6. Establishing innovative partnerships to maximize resources and ensure this Plan achieves its ambitious vision and is fiscally sustainable.

1.5 GENERAL AUTHORITY

This Plan is developed pursuant to the Places to Grow Act, 2005. It applies to the Northern Ontario Growth Plan Area defined by Ontario Regulation 416/05, as amended and as set out in Schedule 1 of this Plan. While this Plan includes policies for enhanced collaboration on various matters with Aboriginal communities and their representative organizations, this Plan has no force or effect on First Nation reserve lands.

This Plan is approved through an Order-in-Council made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council under the Places to Grow Act, 2005.

1.6 HOW TO READ THIS PLAN

This Plan consists of policies, definitions and a schedule. It also includes preambles and appendices to help describe the intent of the policies. The preamble sections and appendices are not policies in this Plan. Terms in italics are defined in the Definitions section of this Plan. The lands within the Northern Ontario Growth Plan Area are also governed by the Public Lands Act, the Far North Act, 2010, and the Planning Act.

The Public Lands Act applies to public lands, which include Crown lands administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources. The Crown Land Use Policy Atlas may provide specific land-use policies regarding land use and/or resource development on these lands.

Land-use planning in the *Far North* is governed by the Far North Act, 2010. Nothing in this Plan is intended to affect decision-making under the Far North Act, 2010. The Far North Act, 2010, provides that where there is a conflict between a *Far North* land use strategy and a growth plan, the strategy prevails. Further, it provides that if there is a conflict on matters related to land use between a growth plan and the mandatory requirements of a community-based land-use plan, those matters included in the community-based land-use plan prevail.

The Provincial Policy Statement, 2005, issued pursuant to the Planning Act, provides overall policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use and development in Ontario. As provided for in the Places to Grow Act, 2005, this Plan prevails where there is a conflict between this Plan and a provincial policy statement issued under section 3 of the Planning Act. The

only exception is where the conflict is between policies relating to the natural environment or human health. In that case, the direction that provides more protection to the natural environment or human health prevails. Detailed conflict provisions are set out in the Places to Grow Act, 2005.

Within this context, this Plan should be read in conjunction with policy documents regarding public lands including the Crown Land Use Policy Atlas and any applicable *Far North* land use strategy, community-based land-use plan or provincial policy statement.

1.7 A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTATION

This Plan provides policy direction for decisions, investments and actions of the Province. It also identifies policy directions that encourage collaboration among other orders of government, as well as non-governmental partners.

All ministries of the Ontario government will have a role to play in implementing the policy and investment priorities outlined in this Plan. Implementation will also require collaboration within and between provincial, municipal and federal governments, Aboriginal communities and organizations, Francophone organizations, industry, businesses, labour organizations, community organizations, and education and research institutions. To successfully implement this Plan, these partners will need to work together over the long term.

The vision of this Plan is comprehensive and far-reaching, and will take time to achieve. Short-, medium- and long-term actions are required to implement the policies of this Plan. Some actions are underway and can be delivered within shorter time frames, while other matters will require further study and planning, and further dialogue with northerners.

2 Economy

2.1 PREAMBLE

This Plan supports and complements the work of northerners, including the region's businesses, entrepreneurs and institutions, to build a strong, resilient and more diversified northern economy.

The policies in this section of this Plan are intended to support growth and diversify the region's traditional resource-based industries. This Plan also seeks to nurture and develop new and emerging economic sectors that have the greatest potential to bring new jobs and opportunities to the North and optimize its competitive advantages in the global economy.

Forestry and the minerals sector are vital to Ontario's economy. These sectors will continue to drive the North's economy through innovation, value-added products and services, and sustainable resource management practices. The North's fertile agricultural areas have growth opportunities in local and niche markets, while a freshwater aquaculture industry is fueled by local and global demand for new, environmentally sustainable sources of fish. Across each of these sectors, opportunities exist in the emerging bioeconomy such as forest-based biomass, bioplastics, agrifuels and biopharmaceuticals.

Within arts and cultural industries, as well as in the tourism sector, competitive advantages arise from the North's unique history, culture and natural environment. This includes gaining an appreciation of the history and culture of Aboriginal peoples and Northern Ontario's French-speaking population, reconnecting with nature, and enjoying the diversity and vibrancy of urban communities.

Driven by innovation and entrepreneurship, the digital economy is creating new career paths for youth, expanding access to health, education and other services, and capitalizing on a bilingual workforce for back-office firms.

The North is home to advanced manufacturing industries, including steel and equipment manufacturing, that gain advantage, in part, from proximity to resources and the shipping channels of the Great Lakes.

The health sciences sector is capitalizing on the region's innovations in health delivery and its renowned medical research and science facilities. To bridge the region's vast geography, a strong transportation and aviation sector has also emerged.

Combining the region's natural assets and strong reputation for environmental stewardship generates opportunities in *renewable energy*, water technologies, and other environmental technologies.

Each of these sectors has an important role to play in the growth of the northern economy. Across all of these sectors, this Plan emphasizes the value of innovation, collaboration, entrepreneurship, research, and environmental stewardship. A forward-thinking approach also includes labour market planning to prepare the workforce for emerging opportunities.

2.2 AN ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN FOR NORTHERN ONTARIO

2.2.1 The Province will collaborate with the federal government, as well as business and industry, municipalities, Aboriginal communities and organizations, the education and research sectors, and community organizations on economic development strategies for *existing and emerging priority economic sectors* as set out in Policies 2.2.2, 2.2.3 and 2.2.4. This collaboration will include ongoing policy research related to northern economic and community development.

2.2.2 The Province will focus economic development strategies on the following *existing and emerging priority economic sectors* and the distinct competitive advantages that Northern Ontario can offer within these sectors:

a) advanced manufacturing

b) agriculture, aquaculture and food processing

c) arts, culture and creative industries

d) digital economy

e) forestry and value-added forestry-related industries

f) health sciences

g) minerals sector and mining supply and services

h) *renewable energy* and services

i) tourism

j) transportation, aviation and aerospace

k) water technologies and services.

2.2.3 Economic development strategies for *existing and emerging priority economic sectors* will examine opportunities to:

a) strengthen networks and collaboration among businesses, industry, the education and research sectors, economic development organizations and northern communities

b) attract investment

c) grow and retain existing competitive businesses, including export development activities and diversification into value-added business opportunities

d) respond to labour market needs and opportunities through education, training and entrepreneurship supports

e) support research tailored to the Northern Ontario context to inform business development and infrastructure planning

f) improve the clarity and efficiency of the provincial regulatory and legislative framework

g) integrate sector considerations in labour market and infrastructure planning.

2.2.4 The Province will bring an integrated approach to these economic development strategies through the creation of regular, five-year economic action plans for Northern Ontario that address:

a) the emergence and development of the *existing and emerging priority economic sectors*

b) *existing and emerging priority economic sectors* that should be the focus of economic development efforts for the next five-year period.

2.2.5 Industry will be encouraged to participate in the development and implementation of the Province's five-year economic action plans and *regional economic plans*.

2.2.6 The Province will work to attract investment to Northern Ontario through:

a) integrated and timely one-window response to investment opportunities

b) measures to address barriers to investment, such as *information and communications technology* infrastructure, energy costs, labour and transportation

c) working with other orders of government to co-ordinate approvals and address complex interjurisdictional issues.

2.3 A GROWING AND DIVERSIFIED ECONOMY

2.3.1 In addition to the matters identified in Policy 2.2.3, economic development initiatives undertaken by the appropriate parties to grow and diversify each e*xisting and emerging priority economic sector*, should include but not be limited to the measures described in Policies 2.3.2 through 2.3.12.

2.3.2 Advanced Manufacturing

1. Efforts by the Province, industry and, where appropriate, other partners, to grow and diversify the advanced manufacturing sector should include:

   a) supporting innovation, research and commercialization of value-added products and services in the *existing and emerging priority economic sectors*

   b) working with prospective investors to identify Northern Ontario opportunities.

2.3.3 Agriculture, Aquaculture and Food Processing

1. Efforts by the Province, industry and, where appropriate, other partners, to grow and diversify the agriculture, aquaculture and food processing sector should include:

   a) undertaking and disseminating research focused on northern climatic and environmental conditions

   b) identifying opportunities for developing the bioeconomy within this sector, including innovative uses of agriculture/food processing, biomass, and collaboration among producers, processors, the forest industry, biorefineries and the biopharmaceutical industry

   c) identifying land improvement and environmental sustainability needs

   d) expanding production in the North to contribute to a sustainable local food source for Northern Ontario residents

   e) exploring opportunities for complementary economic activities on agricultural land, as appropriate

f) supporting buy-local initiatives that increase consumer awareness of Ontario-produced foods and encourage Ontarians to buy locally, including Northern Ontario products

g) marketing and branding that showcases environmental stewardship, innovation and food safety

h) supporting development of production, processing and distribution systems.

2.3.4 Arts, Culture and Creative Industries

1. Efforts by the Province, industry and, where appropriate, other partners, to grow and diversify the arts, culture and creative industries sector should include:

   a) creating opportunities for cultural and artistic expression in urban, rural and *remote communities*, particularly among youth

   b) promoting incentives for film and television, interactive digital media, and computer animation and special effects

   c) expanding access to *information and communications technology* infrastructure

   d) celebrating the unique cultures and histories of the peoples of Northern Ontario

   e) supporting postsecondary education and training programs in digital media.

2.3.5 Digital Economy

1. Efforts by the Province, industry and, where appropriate, other partners, to grow and diversify the digital economy sector should include:

   a) expanding access to *information and communications technology* infrastructure to address current and future needs of businesses, organizations and private citizens

   b) supporting postsecondary education and training programs in digital media

c) encouraging adoption of current *information and communications technologies.*

2.3.6 Forestry and Value-Added Forestry-Related Industries

1. Efforts by the Province, industry and, where appropriate, other partners, to grow and diversify the forestry and value-added forestry-related industry sectors should include:

   a) marketing that showcases Ontario as a global leader in environmentally sustainable forestry and forest stewardship

   b) maximizing the value from the timber resource and optimizing the use of unused fibre

   c) providing a greater role for market forces in the pricing and allocation of Crown timber

   d) creating financially self-sufficient business entities to manage Crown forestry resources on an economically efficient scale

   e) supporting ongoing collaboration among the Province, industry and other partners through a cluster council

   f) encouraging and promoting opportunities for wood construction and the use of wood in public building projects

   g) optimizing forestry's role in carbon trading and sequestration opportunities

   h) identifying opportunities for developing the bioeconomy within this sector, including innovative uses of forestry biomass, and collaboration between pulp and paper mill operators and future biorefineries in Northern Ontario and the chemical, energy, plastics and automotive industries

   i) adopting innovations in the replanting and regeneration of Ontario's forests

   j) supporting research and commercialization expertise in the health, use and regeneration of Ontario tree species, climate change adaptation, and forestry-based bioproducts

k) expanding access to forest resource information

l) facilitating the entry of new participants and entrepreneurs, including Aboriginal businesses, co-operatives and commercial developers.

2.3.7 Health Sciences

1. Efforts by the Province, industry and, where appropriate, other partners, to grow and diversify the health sciences sector should include:

   a) leveraging Northern Ontario's expertise in electronic and distributed health delivery systems and technology into new business and export opportunities

   b) identifying opportunities for developing biopharmaceuticals and promoting cross-sector collaboration

   c) investing in health sciences research and development.

2.3.8 Minerals Sector and Mining Supply and Services

1. Efforts by the Province, industry and, where appropriate, other partners, to grow and diversify the minerals and mining supply and services sectors should include:

   a) marketing that showcases Ontario as a global leader in environmentally sustainable mineral development and stewardship

   b) creating new value-added resource sector opportunities through research, development and application of advanced processing and manufacturing technologies

   c) expanding the mining supply and services industry, increasing exports, and supporting particular areas of competitive advantage including deep mining techniques and clean technologies

   d) improving timeliness and clarity in regulatory processes, supported by a one window, co-ordinated process for approvals

e) expanding geoscience mapping and data collection and public access to resource information to expedite the discovery and development of new minerals and other resources

f) investing in research and innovation that improves the efficiency of industry operations, with an emphasis on extraction and exploration technologies, environmental technologies, and mine closure and rehabilitation processes

g) enabling new mining opportunities

h) facilitating partnerships among communities and industry to optimize community employment and benefits

i) facilitating the entry of new participants and entrepreneurs, including Aboriginal businesses, co-operatives and commercial developers.

2.3.9 Renewable Energy and Services

1. Efforts by the Province, industry and, where appropriate, other partners, to grow and diversify the *renewable energy* sector should include:

   a) facilitating the entry of new participants and entrepreneurs, including Aboriginal communities, co-operatives and commercial developers, in the development of *renewable energy* generation and sustainable energy solutions

   b) attracting investment by enabling municipalities and local distribution companies to invest in community-based *renewable energy* projects

   c) identifying and promoting manufacturing and service industries related to *renewable energy* generation

   d) undertaking an approach to energy planning that supports regional needs by applying staged, flexible options that effectively address the unique needs and priorities of all communities, including those not connected to the grid, as well as the industrial sector in the North

   e) promoting Northern Ontario as a location for *renewable energy* investment, research and commercialization.

2.3.10 Tourism

1. Efforts by the Province, industry and, where appropriate, other partners, to grow and diversify the tourism sector should include:

   a) investing in strategic public infrastructure and the provincial parks system to improve the competitiveness of the tourism industry and enhance the visitor experience

   b) improving training and skills development in strategic areas such as e-technology, marketing, business planning and customer service to enable the tourism industry to better serve domestic and international travelers

   c) encouraging regional co-operation to expand and diversify Northern Ontario's tourism offerings and increase tourism visitation and receipts

   d) encouraging regions and communities to undertake cultural planning that identifies opportunities for promoting tourism, including Aboriginal niche tourism opportunities, and building on the presence of a strong Francophone community to tap into French-speaking markets

   e) encouraging new, flexible and high-quality tourism products for domestic and international visitors

   f) linking Northern Ontario tourism to provincial and national marketing campaigns and promoting the uniqueness of the Northern Ontario experience.

2.3.11 Transportation, Aviation and Aerospace

1. Efforts by the Province, industry and, where appropriate, other partners, to grow and diversify the transportation, aviation and aerospace sector should include:

   a) capitalizing on Northern Ontario's extensive knowledge and experience in air transportation to rural and *remote communities*

   b) encouraging the development and application of innovative aviation technologies, training and infrastructure.

2.3.12 Water Technologies and Services

1. Efforts by the Province, industry and, where appropriate, other partners, to grow and diversify emerging opportunities in the water, wastewater and stormwater technologies and services sector should include:

   a) supporting and promoting research opportunities

   b) encouraging collaboration among Northern Ontario's water technology industries and key water users, including communities, and forestry, mining and *renewable energy* sectors.

2.4 A CULTURE OF INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

2.4.1 The Province will target and prioritize provincial services, investment and programs towards those businesses and industries where innovation is being utilized as a key competitive driver.

2.4.2 The Province will partner with research, innovation and commercialization institutions and organizations to facilitate access to services and resources for incubating new, innovative businesses, including:

a) training, mentoring and networking opportunities, including supports for youth entrepreneurship

b) funding and/or investment opportunities

c) start-up and growth capital.

2.5 INTEGRATED INDUSTRY LABOUR MARKET PLANNING

2.5.1 The Province will work with industry, labour, professional associations and communities to undertake collaborative labour market planning that focuses on:

a) identifying labour market capacities and areas of current and future labour market shortages, including the need for a highly skilled workforce

b) optimizing labour market participation for all Northern Ontario residents, with targeted measures for under-represented groups including the North's Francophone and Aboriginal workforce

c) attracting and retaining skilled workers, including newcomers, to address areas of labour shortages

d) supporting ongoing labour market analysis and research in support of policy development in Northern Ontario.

3 People

3.1 PREAMBLE

Northern Ontario is home to more than 800,000 people. This population is highly diverse. People of many cultures and backgrounds have also migrated, and continue to migrate, to the region. Northern Ontario includes nearly half of Ontario's Aboriginal population, including both on- and off-reserve residents. It also includes approximately 140,000 of Ontario's Francophone people.

People are Northern Ontario's most important resource. They will be the driving force behind the new northern economy. To realize their full potential, northerners will require increased access to health care, education, training, and skills development. In this Plan, particular attention is paid to supporting under-represented groups, such as youth, displaced workers, Francophones, Aboriginal peoples, newcomers, and persons with disabilities. It will also be important to build understanding across cultures so that the contributions of all northerners are supported and valued.

Through collaboration among key partners, including the Province, municipalities, postsecondary institutions, school boards, and others, this Plan will help build a skilled and innovative Northern Ontario workforce by increasing the accessibility and relevancy of education and training. Educational opportunities will be closely tied to the *existing and emerging priority economic sectors* that have the greatest potential to bring new jobs to the region, as well as the trades and professions that are the mainstay of community life. This Plan also includes broader literacy and skills development measures to build an innovative, entrepreneurial and adaptive labour force that is ready for future employment opportunities.

This Plan's policies to support a healthy population include increasing access to health care services for Northern Ontario residents, increasing the number of health professionals practicing in Northern Ontario, and encouraging communities to support and promote healthy living.

Collectively, the health and education policies of this Plan will open up new opportunities for all northerners to contribute to their communities and to the future of Northern Ontario. They will create a Northern Ontario workforce that is ready and able to take advantage of new and emerging economic opportunities.

3.2 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

3.2.1 The Province will work with postsecondary institutions and school boards to expand opportunities for northerners to participate in the secondary and postsecondary educational systems, and to pursue continuing education and training, which could include:

a) innovative approaches and technologies to deliver on-site training in rural communities

b) increasing opportunities for studying college and university programs online

c) making it easier for students to move between institutions to continue their studies, receive transfer credits and graduate in a timely fashion

d) co-operative education opportunities for secondary and postsecondary students with Northern Ontario businesses, with an emphasis on building skills and expertise in the *existing and emerging priority economic sectors*

e) student financial assistance programs that assist eligible students from rural and remote areas with the transportation costs of attending postsecondary institutions

f) opportunities for accessing French-language postsecondary education and training

g) approaches to increase educational attainment of Aboriginal peoples in accordance with Policies 7.4.3 and 7.4.4.

3.2.2 The Province will work with Northern Ontario's postsecondary institutions to provide a diverse complement of courses and programs in line with their evolving missions and mandates, and overall government direction, with a focus on programs that support the development of skills that are critical to the *existing and emerging priority economic sectors* or that have been identified as labour market needs as part of labour market planning in Policy 2.5.1.

3.2.3 The Province will work with Northern Ontario's postsecondary institutions to attract students from across Canada and around the world with the goal of raising Ontario's profile and competitiveness as a world-class destination for postsecondary education.

3.2.4 The Province will work with school boards and other partners to support an educational system (kindergarten to grade 12) that continues to accommodate the unique needs and circumstances of all Northern Ontario communities.

3.2.5 The Province will engage with representatives of Northern Ontario industries, professional associations and school boards when developing school curriculum and educational programming (kindergarten to grade 12).

3.2.6 Areas of study will be integrated into the Province's school curriculum (kindergarten to grade 12) and educational programming that are particularly relevant to building the future of Northern Ontario, and that are engaging to Northern Ontario youth, including:

a) the use of new media and technology

b) job skills and career opportunities in the *existing and emerging priority economic sectors*

c) the history, language and culture of Northern Ontario's Francophone communities and Aboriginal peoples.

3.3 A SKILLED AND INNOVATIVE POPULATION

3.3.1 The Province will collaborate with training and education partners to increase the ability of northern residents to participate in the workforce through programs and initiatives that:

a) enhance job skills, particularly in the *existing and emerging priority economic sectors*

b) improve literacy and basic job readiness skills development

c) support career planning, training and transitioning into the workforce

d) facilitate trades and apprenticeship training

e) improve digital literacy to facilitate the transition of workers into new employment opportunities.

3.3.2 The Province will work with Northern Ontario communities to attract new and needed skills and ideas through provincial and other programs that attract skilled newcomers and international students to Northern Ontario's communities and postsecondary institutions.

3.4 A HEALTHY POPULATION

3.4.1 The Province will seek to increase the number of health professionals practicing in Northern Ontario by:

a) continuing to recruit and retain qualified health professionals

b) promoting health care as a career choice for more northerners, including Francophone and Aboriginal residents of Northern Ontario

c) increasing rural and remote clinical education opportunities for medical students

d) supporting education, recruitment and retention, mentorship and clinical placements for all health care students

e) continuing to reduce barriers and support training and assessment programs for qualified, internationally educated health care professionals

f) using technology to share expertise and mentorship between Northern Ontario hospitals, and practitioners and specialists from outside of the region.

3.4.2 The Province will seek to improve access to health care services for Northern Ontario residents by:

a) supporting and strengthening health care planning and delivery approaches in Northern Ontario

b) providing programs that facilitate aging at home to allow seniors to live healthy, independent lives in the comfort and dignity of their own homes

c) continuing the development and implementation of tools to enhance patient care, including diagnostic imaging technology, remote patient evaluation systems, and handheld applications for recording clinical information

d) expanding scopes of practice of non-physician health professionals such as nurse practitioners and physician assistants

e) strengthening existing programs and developing new programs to promote health and prevent the occurrences of injuries, illness, chronic conditions and their resulting disabilities in a manner that is relevant to Northern Ontario needs

f) supporting the need for French services in French-language designated communities.

3.4.3 Municipalities are encouraged to support and promote healthy living by providing for communities with a diverse mix of land uses, a range and mix of employment and housing types, high-quality public open spaces, and easy access to local stores and services.

4 Communities

4.1 PREAMBLE

How communities are planned and designed has far-reaching impacts. Well-planned and thoughtfully designed communities will attract investment and support economic development, attract and retain skilled workers, strengthen cultural identity and heritage, and maintain a clean and healthy environment. The policies in this section of this Plan support community planning in Northern Ontario that balances the equally important priorities of human, economic and environmental health.

Northern Ontario includes 144 municipalities, 106 First Nations, Métis communities, and more than 150 unincorporated communities. These communities are diverse, ranging from remote settlements of just a few hundred people, to large cities. Each of these communities will need to find its role and place in the evolving Northern Ontario economy. All of them will play an important role in implementing this Plan and achieving a healthy, prosperous future for the North.

This begins at the local level with establishing a clear vision for each community's future, and mapping out the path to achieve this vision. Official plans, community economic plans and participation in community planning efforts are effective tools and approaches to ensure citizens' and businesses' views are reflected in their communities' future economy and long-term sustainability. Support for the realization of these visions is provided through a range of existing planning and fiscal tools under the Planning Act, as well as other legislation.

Of particular importance are the communities, both large and small, that function as the *economic and service hubs* of the North. These communities act as regional service centres for surrounding communities. They are critical gateways between the North and other economic regions in Ontario and beyond. They are also points of convergence for major infrastructure, including transportation, energy, *information and communications technology*, and *community infrastructure*. The prosperity of all northerners, and all northern communities, depends on the strength of these hubs. They will become the catalysts for the economic development of Northern Ontario.

More than half of northerners live in the cities of Greater Sudbury, North Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins and Thunder Bay. These cities are economic hubs that benefit all of Northern Ontario, and in some cases have a large bilingual population. They possess the critical mass of skilled people, as well as regional assets such as colleges and universities, innovation centres, media centres, commerce and cultural facilities that can anchor many of the North's *existing and emerging priority economic sectors*. They are optimal locations for infrastructure investments that help to expand on this potential, and that serve citizens across the North. These cities also have great potential to leverage investments and growth to develop vibrant, mixed-use core areas with a range of employment and housing opportunities, higher density development, and public transit.

Building a vibrant, resilient northern economy requires strong, individual communities. It also requires collaboration among these communities to develop a regional approach to economic development. Collaborative regional economic planning recognizes the interconnectedness and distinct contributions of urban, rural and Aboriginal communities. It complements economic development strategies for Northern Ontario as a whole by tailoring pan-northern directions to local circumstances and opportunities.

4.2 LONG-RANGE PLANNING FOR ALL COMMUNITIES

4.2.1 All municipalities should, either individually, or collaboratively with neighbouring municipalities and Aboriginal communities, prepare long-term community strategies. These strategies should support the goals and objectives of this Plan, identify local opportunities to implement the policies of this Plan, and be designed to achieve the following:

a) economic, social and environmental sustainability

b) accommodation of the diverse needs of all residents, now and in the future

c) optimized use of existing infrastructure

d) a high quality of place

e) a vibrant, welcoming and inclusive community identity that builds on unique local features

f) local implementation of *regional economic plans*, where such plans have been completed.

4.2.2 Municipalities and planning boards are encouraged to:

a) align their official plan policies with their long-term community strategies developed in accordance with Policy 4.2.1

b) employ the use of available tools to support and facilitate land-use planning that implements their long-term community strategies.

4.2.3 The Province will encourage collaboration with Aboriginal communities in land-use planning in accordance with the Policies in 7.5.

4.3 ECONOMIC AND SERVICE HUBS

4.3.1 The Minister of Infrastructure will work with the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry and other ministries to identify *economic and service hubs* in consultation with municipalities and other parties, as appropriate.

4.3.2 *Economic and service hubs* should be designed to:

a) accommodate a significant portion of future population and employment growth in Northern Ontario

b) function as service centres that deliver important region-wide public services to the broader surrounding regions

c) function as economic hubs linking Northern Ontario with other significant economic regions in Ontario and beyond.

4.3.3 *Economic and service hubs* shall maintain updated official plans and develop other supporting documents which include strategies for:

a) developing a diverse mix of land uses, an appropriate range of housing types, and high quality public spaces; and providing easy access to stores, services and recreational opportunities

b) maintaining up to a 20-year supply of lands, or as otherwise provided by a provincial policy statement, for a variety of employment uses in appropriate locations to support economic development objectives

c) improving access to public services by local residents and by residents of surrounding communities

d) encouraging a significant portion of future residential and employment development to locate in existing downtown areas, *intensification corridors*, *brownfield sites*, and *strategic core areas*

e) providing for a range of transportation options

f) enhancing community identity, vibrancy and cultural amenities.

4.3.4. *Economic and service hubs* shall be focal areas for investment in regional transportation, energy, *information and communications technology*, and *community infrastructure*.

4.4 STRATEGIC CORE AREAS

4.4.1 The following municipalities contain *strategic core areas*:

- Greater Sudbury
- North Bay
- Sault Ste. Marie
- Thunder Bay
- Timmins.

4.4.2 Municipalities that contain *strategic core areas* are encouraged to plan for these areas to function as vibrant, walkable, mixed-use districts that can:

a) attract employment uses and clusters, including office and retail

b) accommodate higher densities

c) provide a broad range of amenities accessible to residents and visitors including vibrant streetscapes, shopping, entertainment, transportation connections, lodging, and educational, health, social and cultural services.

4.4.3 Municipalities that contain *strategic core areas* should develop in their official plans and other supporting documents a revitalization strategy that includes:

a) delineation of the *strategic core areas*

b) targeted approaches to support the revitalization and *intensification* of the *strategic core areas*, including:

i) identification and prioritization of opportunities for the redevelopment of *brownfield sites* within the *strategic core areas*

ii) a minimum target for the *intensification* of the *strategic core areas*.

4.4.4 *Strategic core areas* with a revitalization strategy in place and incorporated into an official plan should be the preferred location for major capital investments in:

a) postsecondary education and training

b) regional hospitals and/or specialized health care

c) major redevelopment projects

d) research and innovation centres

e) major cultural institutions and entertainment facilities

f) integrated public *transportation systems*.

4.5 REGIONAL ECONOMIC PLANNING

4.5.1 The Province will identify *regional economic planning areas* as an inclusive, collaborative mechanism for long-term economic development, labour market, and infrastructure planning that crosses municipal boundaries.

4.5.2 The Province will help strengthen the capacity of Northern Ontario communities to plan for economic development by supporting the development of strategic *regional economic plans* for each *regional economic planning area*. *Regional economic plans* will, at minimum:

a) involve collaboration among municipalities, Aboriginal communities, Francophone communities and their institutions, business and industry, education and research sectors, and community organizations

b) identify regional linkages and synergies with provincial economic action plans developed in accordance with Policies 2.2.4 and 2.2.5

c) identify strategic economic strengths, challenges and opportunities of the *regional economic planning area*, with a focus on aligning regional economic development priorities with *existing and emerging priority economic sectors*

d) identify land, infrastructure and labour market opportunities and needs to support the *regional economic planning area's* economic development priorities

e) provide context and direction to local economic development efforts.

4.5.3 The Province will work with communities to prepare resources and tools to assist communities to participate in regional economic planning.

Infrastructure

5.1 PREAMBLE

Efficient, modern infrastructure is critical to Northern Ontario's future. Transportation, education, health, energy, water and wastewater infrastructure, *information and communications technology* and *community infrastructure* are the building blocks for economic growth. Throughout this Plan, policies and priorities are identified related to skills development, health, research and development, business innovation, sector diversification, and much more. The success of each of these will depend on the necessary infrastructure being in place to support and sustain them.

Transportation infrastructure, including roads, rail, air, and waterways, connects communities within the North to one another and to the rest of the world. Northerners often need to travel great distances to access work, education and health services. Northern businesses need to be able to reach markets around the world. For Northern Ontario's *remote communities*, winter roads and air transportation are vital lifelines for fuel, food, basic amenities and access to education, health and emergency services. An integrated, long-term transportation plan is needed to maintain and enhance the North's transportation infrastructure and to improve connectivity among the various modes of travel.

Information and communications technology infrastructure is now core infrastructure for businesses and industries of all sizes. It is critical to the delivery of education and health services and it has become mainstream in communications, social interaction and leisure activities. In a global marketplace, access to current *information and communications technologies* has become a

minimum requirement for businesses to operate competitively. Infrastructure for modern and efficient *information and communications technology* is particularly important to rural and *remote communities*. It provides residents with access to information, public services, health support, education and training, and employment opportunities.

Energy generation and transmission infrastructure in Northern Ontario supports all sectors of the northern economy, particularly large energy users in the manufacturing and resource sectors. It also supplements the energy supply to other parts of the province. The availability of renewable resources, such as hydro-electric, wind and biofuels, places the North at a significant competitive advantage when it comes to expanding Ontario's *renewable energy* supply. Investment in Northern Ontario's energy generation and transmission infrastructure supports the growth and development of the energy sector and also provides secure and reliable energy supply for all sectors of the northern economy.

This Plan provides a vehicle for aligning and co-ordinating infrastructure investments to support its economic development priorities, and to meet the needs of existing and future residents. This requires working closely with partners including the federal government and municipalities.

5.2 CO-ORDINATED, STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS

5.2.1 Infrastructure planning, land-use planning, and infrastructure investments will be co-ordinated to implement this Plan. Infrastructure includes, but is not limited to: *transportation systems*, water and wastewater infrastructure, waste management systems, energy infrastructure, *community infrastructure*, and *information and communications technology* infrastructure.

5.2.2 In Northern Ontario, the Province will give priority to infrastructure investments that support the policies in this Plan.

5.2.3 The Minister of Infrastructure will work with partner ministries, the federal government, and other public sector partners to identify strategic infrastructure needs to support the implementation of this Plan.

5.2.4 Infrastructure planning and investments will contribute to a culture of conservation by, wherever feasible, utilizing approaches and technologies that reduce energy and water use, increase efficiencies, and promote *intensification* and *brownfield site* redevelopment.

5.2.5 All municipalities are encouraged to co-ordinate with neighbouring communities and industry to improve the long-term viability and sustainability of infrastructure investments.

5.3 A MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

5.3.1 *Transportation system* planning, land-use planning, and transportation investments will be co-ordinated to implement this Plan.

5.3.2 The *transportation system* within Northern Ontario will be planned and managed with an emphasis on opportunities to:

a) optimize the capacity, efficiency and safety of the existing *transportation system*

b) link major markets, resource development areas, and *economic and service hubs*

c) meet the needs of the *existing and emerging priority economic sectors* and help implement *regional economic plans*

d) enhance connectivity among transportation modes including rail, road, marine and air

e) create or strengthen linkages between *economic and service hubs* and rural and *remote communities*

f) reduce emissions and other environmental impacts associated with transportation.

5.3.3 In recognition of the vital role that the air transportation network plays in Northern Ontario with respect to economic development, mobility, and access to core services such as health care and fire protection, the Province will participate in efforts with the federal government and municipalities to develop business development strategies for northern airports that address capital and operating needs and financing options.

5.3.4 The Province will work with partners to optimize the freight transportation and tourism development potential of northern waterways and ports in an environmentally responsible way.

5.3.5 The Province will work with *remote communities* and other orders of government to realign winter roads and work towards improved access for residents of these communities.

5.4 EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE

5.4.1 The Province will work with the education, research and economic development sectors to increase access to education and training in Northern Ontario through innovative approaches to distributive education including:

a) technologies to deliver on-site training in rural communities

b) multi-use facilities for learning and training

c) strengthening partnerships among school boards, training boards, postsecondary institutions including Northern Ontario's French-language colleges and bilingual universities, Aboriginal education and training organizations, distance learning networks, innovation centres and industry.

5.5 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE

5.5.1 Investments in *information and communications technology* infrastructure will support:

a) economic development, including the implementation of Policy 2.2.1, as well as the implementation of *regional economic plans* as described in the Policies in 4.5

b) educational attainment, including the implementation of Policy 3.2.1

c) access to health care services, including the implementation of Policy 3.4.2

d) public safety and emergency preparedness.

5.6 ENERGY

5.6.1 The Province, working with the Ontario Power Authority and licensed transmission and distribution companies, will identify investment opportunities in Northern Ontario's transmission and distribution systems to maintain reliability, meet new and growing demands, and accommodate *renewable energy* generation.

5.6.2 The Province will work with Hydro One, the Ontario Power Authority, remote off-grid communities and the federal government to identify opportunities and assess the feasibility of long-term alternatives to diesel-generated power.

5.6.3 The Province will work with the Ontario Power Authority and local distribution companies to seek opportunities to increase the efficiency of energy use in Northern Ontario communities.

6 Environment

6.1 PREAMBLE

The land and its natural resources have sustained the people and driven the economy of Northern Ontario for generations. Even with recent diversification into non-resource-based activities, the region's environment still anchors much of the economy. Many of the region's emerging economic sectors, such as *renewable energy*, water technologies and the bioeconomy, depend upon the health and sustainable development of the region's natural resources.

The natural environment is not just important as the basis for a strong economy, it also supports the health, quality of life and identity of northerners. Spectacular natural areas are a unique, irreplaceable part of Northern Ontario's heritage. Northerners take pride in this natural heritage, and take seriously their role as the stewards of the natural environment so that it can be enjoyed by future generations.

Northern Ontario includes two of the Great Lakes: Lake Superior and Lake Huron. The Great Lakes are not only a valued environmental feature but provide Northern Ontario with innumerable economic advantages. Northern Ontario's many lakes and waterways are valued for their environmental benefits, as popular community and tourism attractors and for their contribution to commercial and recreational fishing. Their clean and reliable supply of water feeds the North's manufacturing industries including transportation, bioproducts and food processing. The Great Lakes also form a major inland waterway, providing an efficient means of bulk commodity transport for Ontario, including the North.

This Plan supports the sustainable development of natural resources with a balanced approach to environmental, social and economic health.

This Plan also recognizes the need for climate change mitigation and adaptation, which is of particular importance in the North. Average temperatures are rising more quickly in the North than in the rest of Ontario. This will alter the profile of the boreal forest and the sensitive ecology of waterways, lakes and wetlands. It threatens the region's biodiversity, increases the risk of storms and forest fires, and shortens the transportation season for *remote communities* that rely on temporary ice roads to import essential supplies. Climate change will also result in new economic opportunities, such as longer growing seasons for agricultural producers and the development of a carbon offsets market.

A commitment to environmental protection and conservation is reinforced through a commitment to environmental leadership and a culture of conservation. Sustainability planning at the local level, and environmental leadership demonstrated at both the provincial and municipal government levels and within industry, will help meet this Plan's environmental protection objectives, and lay the groundwork required for the North to transition to a green economy.

This Plan is built on a solid understanding of the multiple values and benefits that the North's renowned natural environment provides to the people and the economy of the region, and the province.

6.2 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

6.2.1 Provincial policies, programs, and regulations will integrate approaches to natural resource management to support environmental, social and economic health.

6.2.2 Natural resource management and stewardship practices will occur within a framework that recognizes and responds to evolving environmental, economic and social values, and science-based knowledge and information, which allows for the introduction of new practices, technologies and management approaches, traditional knowledge, and locally and regionally responsive approaches.

6.2.3 As part of the Northern Ontario economic action plans and *regional economic plans* in accordance with Policies 2.2.4 and 4.5.2, opportunities should be explored for new, value-added and sustainable uses for Northern Ontario's natural resources, such as carbon storage and trading, eco-tourism, and *renewable energy*.

6.3 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

6.3.1 In the *Far North*, conservation direction and planning will be pursuant to the Far North Act, 2010.

6.3.2 Municipalities are encouraged to contribute to the protection of *surface water features* and *ground water features* by:

a) planning and designing municipal water and wastewater systems that return water to the Great Lake watershed from which the withdrawal originates

b) co-ordinating planning for potable water, stormwater, and wastewater systems with communities with which they share inland water sources and/or receiving water bodies.

6.3.3 The Province will work with the federal government, municipalities and others to incorporate climate change mitigation and adaptation considerations, where appropriate, into planning and decision-making, including monitoring programs and tools to measure and understand climate change and its impacts on Northern Ontario.

6.3.4 The Province will facilitate the development of *renewable energy* projects in Northern Ontario through Ontario Power Authority programs and within the applicable regulatory and land-use policy environment.

6.3.5 The Province will work with the federal government, municipalities and others to include measures to protect and preserve air quality, water quality and quantity, and natural heritage in planning for climate change impacts and environmental sustainability.

6.4 ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP AND A CULTURE OF CONSERVATION

6.4.1 Planning and decision-making by the Province and municipalities should consider opportunities for fostering a culture of conservation and demonstrating environmental leadership by adopting sustainability practices.

6.4.2 As part of their long-term community strategies being prepared in accordance with Policy 4.2.1, municipalities that are identified pursuant to this Plan as *economic and service hubs* should identify environmental sustainability objectives, as well as develop policies and programs for their achievement, related to:

a) water conservation

b) energy conservation

c) air quality protection

d) integrated waste management.

6.4.3 The Province will work with the federal government, municipalities and others to promote Northern Ontario locations for investments to contribute to the growth of Ontario's green economy including opportunities for research and commercialization of green technologies.

7 Aboriginal Peoples

7.1 PREAMBLE

The First Nations and the Métis communities across the North continue to shape the history and economy of the area. Ontario recognizes the unique role that Aboriginal peoples have had and will continue to have in the development of the North. With 29 per cent of the Aboriginal population under the age of 15,[1] the contributions of Aboriginal youth in particular will be vital to the North's future success.

Existing Aboriginal and treaty rights are recognized and affirmed in Canada's constitution. Ontario is committed to respecting these rights and meeting its duty to consult Aboriginal peoples, where Ontario's actions may have a potential adverse impact on an Aboriginal or treaty right, and accommodate as appropriate.

The Province is committed to working co-operatively with Aboriginal communities to build mutual understanding of each other's perspectives and priorities. This includes on-reserve Aboriginal peoples, as well as the more than half of the Aboriginal population that lives off-reserve in urban and rural communities. The Province is also committed to enhancing relationships and developing a comprehensive approach for ministries, municipalities and industry to meaningfully engage Aboriginal peoples. Ontario recognizes and respects the aspirations of Aboriginal peoples to establish effective, accountable and culturally appropriate governance structures within their communities.

1 Statistics Canada. *2007 Aboriginal Population Profile*. 2006 Census, released January 15, 2008. The total Aboriginal identity population includes the Aboriginal groups (North American Indian, Métis and Inuit), multiple Aboriginal responses and Aboriginal responses not included elsewhere.

Economic development in Aboriginal communities is a key element of this Plan. Aboriginal communities and the Aboriginal workforce offer unique strengths that can benefit all of Northern Ontario. Many Aboriginal communities have adopted economic development approaches that reflect a connection to the land and a focus on community benefits. There is considerable potential to integrate the economic development planning of Aboriginal communities with other regional efforts. This Plan seeks to involve Aboriginal communities and organizations in economic development, and to improve the capacity of these communities to participate in economic development planning.

This Plan also seeks to address the socio-economic gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Northern Ontario through the substantial improvement of educational attainment and health status.

The Province is committed to working closely with municipal and federal governments, and Aboriginal communities and organizations to achieve the desired outcomes of this Plan. The federal government plays a critical role in supporting education, health and other important services on First Nations reserve lands.

7.2 ABORIGINAL AND TREATY RIGHTS

7.2.1 The Province will respect existing Aboriginal and treaty rights and Ontario will fulfill any duty to consult triggered in the implementation of this Plan.

7.2.2 The Province will develop consultation frameworks, guidelines and tools to support efforts by the Province and third parties to consult with or engage Aboriginal peoples.

7.2.3 The Province will support capacity-building for Aboriginal communities and their representative organizations to improve their ability to meaningfully participate in consultation and engagement with the Province and third parties, including through training and education regarding provincial land-use planning, resource planning, and resource development.

7.2.4 The Province will work with the federal government and others to expeditiously settle outstanding Aboriginal land claims to which Ontario is a party.

7.3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

7.3.1 The Province will work with Aboriginal communities and organizations to increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal peoples as part of the economic development strategies for *existing and emerging priority economic sectors*, as set out in Policies 2.2.1, 2.2.2, and 2.2.3.

7.3.2 Aboriginal communities will be involved in the development of *regional economic plans*, in accordance with the Policies in 4.5.

7.3.3 The Province will work with Aboriginal communities and organizations, the federal government, and others to expand opportunities for Aboriginal peoples to participate in local labour markets by:

a) increasing Ontario internships, work exchange and summer experience opportunities and awareness of these programs in Aboriginal communities

b) continuing to increase access to education, skills training and apprenticeship opportunities in rural and *remote communities*

c) working with Aboriginal communities to develop economic opportunities close to home while also working to provide supports for those people who relocate for training and education

d) encouraging partnerships among Aboriginal communities, postsecondary institutions, skills training providers and industry to respond to unique labour market needs.

7.3.4 The Province will support the capacity of Aboriginal communities and organizations to participate in economic development opportunities through:

a) training and support for Aboriginal economic development agencies

b) encouraging industry to continue to work with Aboriginal communities and organizations to advance local education, training and employment opportunities.

7.3.5 The Province will work to develop new approaches and mechanisms to support Aboriginal enterprises, including:

a) provincial procurement procedures that emphasize support for Aboriginal businesses

b) alternative mechanisms (including working capital and micro-capital) for Aboriginal enterprises to attain collateral and equity positions

c) removing barriers to the eligibility of various forms of Aboriginal enterprises, including social enterprises and co-operatives, to provincial government programs

d) targeted promotion of provincial programs within Aboriginal communities.

7.3.6 The Province will work with the federal government and other partners to consider the needs of Aboriginal communities when identifying infrastructure investment priorities in accordance with the Policies in 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6.

7.4 HEALTH STATUS AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

7.4.1 The Province will work with Aboriginal communities and organizations, the federal government and others towards addressing the socio-economic gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Northern Ontario.

7.4.2 The Province will work with Aboriginal communities and organizations, and the federal government to establish and monitor the achievement of benchmarks, targets and indicators for education and health attainment and progress toward the achievement of Policy 7.4.1.

7.4.3 The Province will work with the federal government to facilitate the successful transition of First Nations students who are living on reserve into provincial and postsecondary education and training opportunities through one or more of the following measures:

a) transition support programs

b) increased Ontario internships

c) work exchange and summer experience opportunities for Aboriginal youth

d) development of more consistent curriculum standards.

7.4.4 Provincial health and education services for Aboriginal peoples will be delivered in culturally appropriate ways that may include:

a) increasing the number of Aboriginal teachers and support staff in the provincial school system

b) encouraging programs to bring elders into the classroom

c) including a strong focus on protecting and promoting unique Aboriginal culture, language and arts as part of educational programs

d) increasing access to community health, education and training services delivered through Aboriginal service providers

e) providing space in health care facilities for spiritual healing.

7.4.5 The Province will work with Aboriginal communities, the federal government and other partners toward restoring literacy and fluency in Aboriginal languages.

7.5 COLLABORATION WITH ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES IN LAND-USE PLANNING

7.5.1 The Province will work with Aboriginal communities to improve their participation and knowledge sharing in existing land-use planning and policy processes throughout Northern Ontario.

7.5.2 The Province will continue to support and value community-based land-use planning undertaken by First Nations communities in the *Far North*, and to encourage co-ordination of planning among First Nations communities outside of the *Far North*, on their reserves, and municipalities.

7.5.3 Provincial planning affecting Crown land and resources will include Aboriginal communities and their representative organizations by considering:

a) available Aboriginal traditional knowledge

b) unique internal decision-making structures

c) appropriate dispute resolution approaches, processes and other methods.

8 Implementation

8.1 PREAMBLE

This Plan has been prepared under the Places to Grow Act, 2005. It is a long-term framework to guide planning and decision-making over the next 25 years. This Plan sets out a vision and a series of policies that are designed to build stronger and more prosperous communities that are well-equipped to take advantage of new and emerging economic opportunities. Successful implementation of this Plan will require collaboration and partnerships that build upon the unique strengths of the North, its people, and its economy.

Some of the policies in this Plan will be supported by short-term actions that are implemented in the near future, both to achieve immediate outcomes and to lay the foundation for longer-term directions. Other policies will be supported by longer-term actions that are implemented over the course of several years.

While this Plan is a Government of Ontario plan, and the Ontario Ministries of Infrastructure and Northern Development, Mines and Forestry will lead this Plan's overall implementation, its success will be a collective effort, involving all communities, all orders of government, and all sectors of Northern Ontario. It will require collaboration within and among provincial, municipal, and federal governments, Aboriginal communities and organizations, Francophone organizations, industry, businesses, labour organizations, community organizations, and education and research institutions.

Ontario will work to engage the federal government as a key partner and explore opportunities to align federal policy and investment planning with the policies of this Plan, and to support this Plan's implementation.

Aboriginal communities and organizations will play a key role in economic, infrastructure, labour force, and community planning both within Aboriginal communities and as partners in broader regional initiatives.

All communities in Northern Ontario will play an important role in the implementation of this Plan. They will be the driving forces at the local level with respect to economic, infrastructure, labour force, and community planning. All communities in Northern Ontario will be responsible for the implementation of this Plan through decisions that conform to this Plan and amending official plans to conform with this Plan.

Business and industry and their associations will be important contributors to economic development planning, including *regional economic plans* and sectoral development strategies. Their leadership and innovation across all sectors and all business areas will be essential to Northern Ontario's success.

Educational institutions will be the key partners in developing the skills and capacities of Northern Ontario residents, and leading the research that will position the North for economic success.

The Province will continue to engage northerners so that their views and aspirations shape this Plan's implementation. This work will include dialogue and information sharing to build understanding of this Plan's directions and to actively involve northerners in this Plan's delivery. This engagement will be supported by monitoring and performance measures that provide a continuing assessment of the status of this Plan's implementation.

8.2 AN ENGAGED AND INFORMED POPULATION

8.2.1 The Province will work to implement the policies of this Plan in a manner that is responsive to Northern Ontario through:

a) establishing a northern policy institute

b) seeking out the views and aspirations of Northern Ontario residents and businesses

c) using a variety of consultation mechanisms, in both English and French, such as regional public meetings and online consultation

d) including individuals and organizations that possess expertise related to Northern Ontario's strengths, needs, and opportunities, where appropriate, on technical working groups, public boards, agencies, and commissions.

8.2.2 The Minister of Infrastructure and the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry will involve northerners in the implementation of this Plan, and will provide information to build understanding of this Plan and facilitate informed involvement in the implementation of this Plan.

8.3 CO-ORDINATED AND COLLABORATIVE DECISION-MAKING

8.3.1 A co-ordinated approach will be taken within the Province to implement this Plan.

8.3.2 Provincial ministries will work to implement the priorities and policies of this Plan in developing new programs or capital investments or when implementing existing programs or initiatives.

8.3.3 The Province will work collaboratively with other partners including the federal government, municipalities, Aboriginal communities and organizations, Francophone organizations, businesses, industry associations and community stakeholders to implement this Plan.

8.3.4 The Province will work with the federal government and municipalities to integrate regulatory and other approvals processes, where appropriate.

8.4 MONITORING AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

8.4.1 The Minister of Infrastructure and the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry will jointly monitor overall implementation of this Plan and report on what progress provincial ministries and municipalities have made to implement the policies in this Plan.

8.4.2 The Minister of Infrastructure and the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry will work with external partners to develop a set of performance indicators to assist in Plan monitoring and reporting as set out in Policy 8.4.1.

8.4.3 Success in achieving this Plan's outcomes will, in part, be measured by assessing progress in:

a) attracting investment and business growth in Northern Ontario

b) diversifying the North's economic base

c) supporting education and skills development of the North's workforce

d) increasing the involvement of Aboriginal peoples in the northern economy

e) improving the connectivity of the northern population though information technologies.

It is further acknowledged that long-term progress in these areas requires sustained, co-ordinated efforts by the Province and all its external partners.

8.4.4 The Province is further committed to the development of performance measures for ministry-specific initiatives that support implementation of the policies in this Plan.

8.5 GENERAL IMPLEMENTATION

8.5.1 This Plan, including preamble sections, policies, definitions, schedule and appendices should be read in its entirety and all relevant policies are to be applied to each situation.

8.5.2 Terms in italics are defined in the Definitions section of this Plan. The definitions apply to these italicized terms regardless of whether the terms are singular or plural.

8.5.3 In the Definitions section, sources have been cited where the definitions are the same or have the same content as the definitions provided in the policy or statute cited.

8.5.4 Unless otherwise stated, the boundaries and lines displayed on Schedule 1 provide general direction only and are not to scale.

8.5.5 Where this Plan indicates that further analysis and assessment will be carried out but the analysis has not been completed, all relevant policies of this Plan continue to apply and any policy that relies on information that will be available from further analysis should be implemented to the fullest extent possible.

8.5.6 Where policies contain a list of sub-policies, the list of sub-policies is to be applied in its entirety unless otherwise specified.

9 Definitions

Brownfield Sites
Undeveloped or previously developed properties that may be contaminated. They are usually, but not exclusively, former industrial or commercial properties that may be underutilized, derelict or vacant. (Provincial Policy Statement, 2005)

Community Infrastructure
Lands, buildings, and structures that support the quality of life for people and communities by providing public services for health, education, recreation, socio-cultural activities, security and safety, and affordable housing.

Economic and Service Hubs
Northern municipalities identified by the Minister of Infrastructure, working with the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry and other ministries, that, due to their current critical mass of population and employment, location and existing assets, serve as focal points for regional service delivery and infrastructure networks over the course of the implementation of this Plan. *Economic and service hubs* may also contain *strategic core areas*.

Existing and Emerging Priority Economic Sectors
Both established and newer sectors of economic activity that are encouraged to grow and/or diversify identified in Policy 2.2.2.

Far North
The geographic area of the *Far North* as defined in the Far North Act, 2010.

Ground Water Feature

Water-related features in the earth's subsurface, including recharge/discharge areas, water tables, aquifers and unsaturated zones that can be defined by surface and subsurface hydrogeologic investigations. (Provincial Policy Statement, 2005)

Information and Communications Technology

All technical means used to handle information and aid communication, including digital infrastructure, computer and network hardware, as well as necessary software.

Intensification

The development of a property, site or area at a higher density than currently exists through:

- redevelopment, including the reuse of *brownfield sites*
- the development of vacant and/or underutilized lots within previously developed areas
- infill development
- the expansion or conversion of existing buildings.
  (Provincial Policy Statement, 2005)

Intensification Corridors

Areas along major roads, arterials or transit corridors that have the potential to provide a focus for higher density mixed-use development.

Regional Economic Planning Area

A defined geographic area within Northern Ontario for which a *regional economic plan* is developed and implemented, in accordance with the Policies in 4.5.

Regional Economic Plans

Coordinated and integrated multi-community economic development strategies that have been developed to retain and attract investment within a defined *regional economic planning area.*

Remote Communities

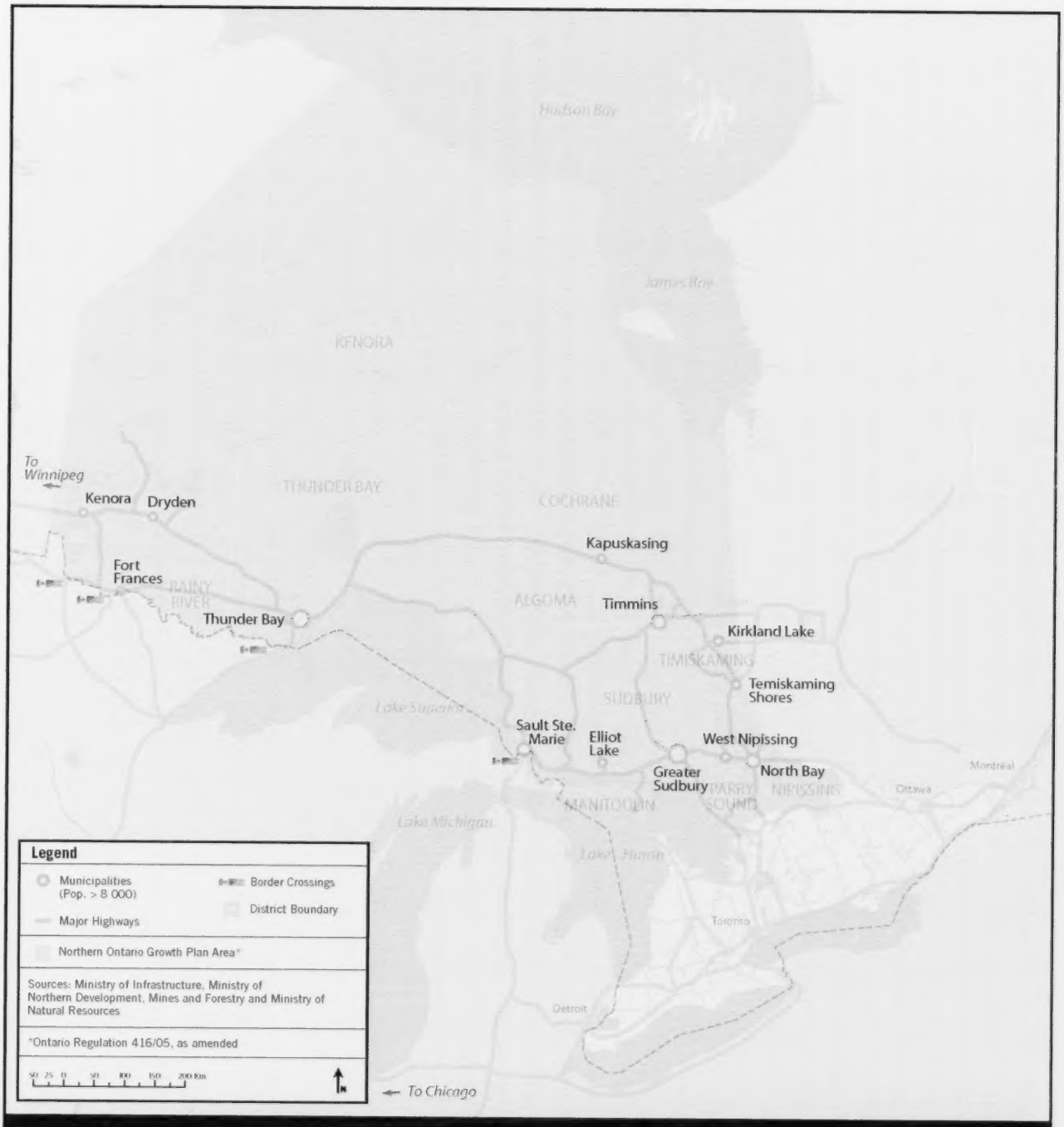
Communities that cannot be reached by all-season roads.

Renewable Energy
Electrical power from an energy source that is renewed by natural processes including, but not limited to, wind, water, a biomass resource or product, or solar and geothermal energy.

Strategic Core Areas
Delineated medium-to-high density areas within identified municipalities that are priority areas for long-term revitalization, *intensification* and investment. These areas may consist of downtown areas, and other key nodes and significant corridors.

Surface Water Feature
Water-related features on the earth's surface, including headwaters, rivers, stream channels, inland lakes, seepage areas, recharge/discharge areas, springs, wetlands, and associated riparian lands that can be defined by their soil moisture, soil type, vegetation or topographic characteristics. (Provincial Policy Statement, 2005)

Transportation System
A system consisting of corridors and rights-of-way for the movement of people and goods, and associated transportation facilities.



Ontario

PLACES TO GROW

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SCHEDULE 1

Northern Ontario Growth Plan Area

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APPENDIX 1

Context Map: Location of Northern Ontario Within Ontario

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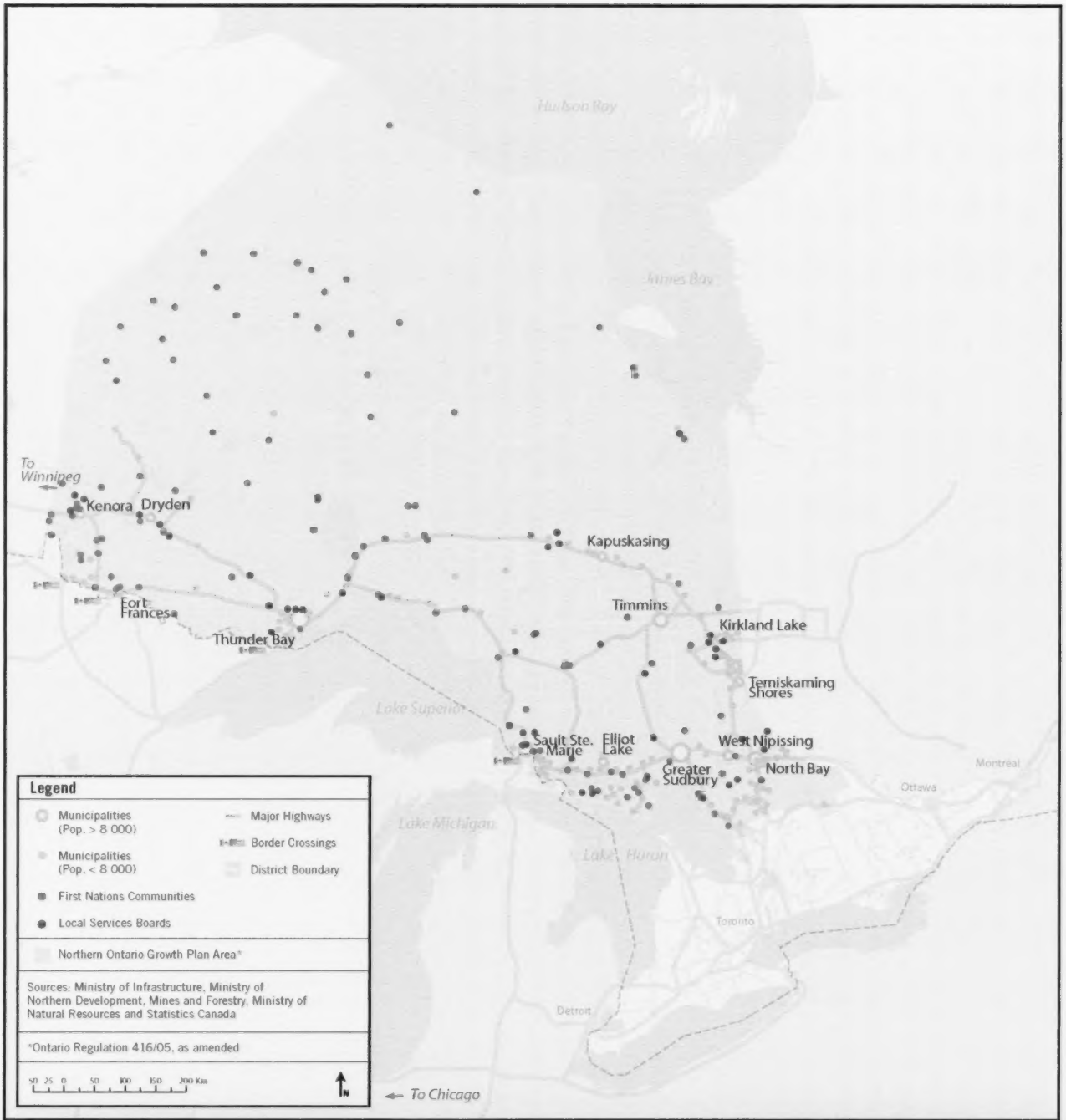

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APPENDIX 2

Northern Ontario Communities

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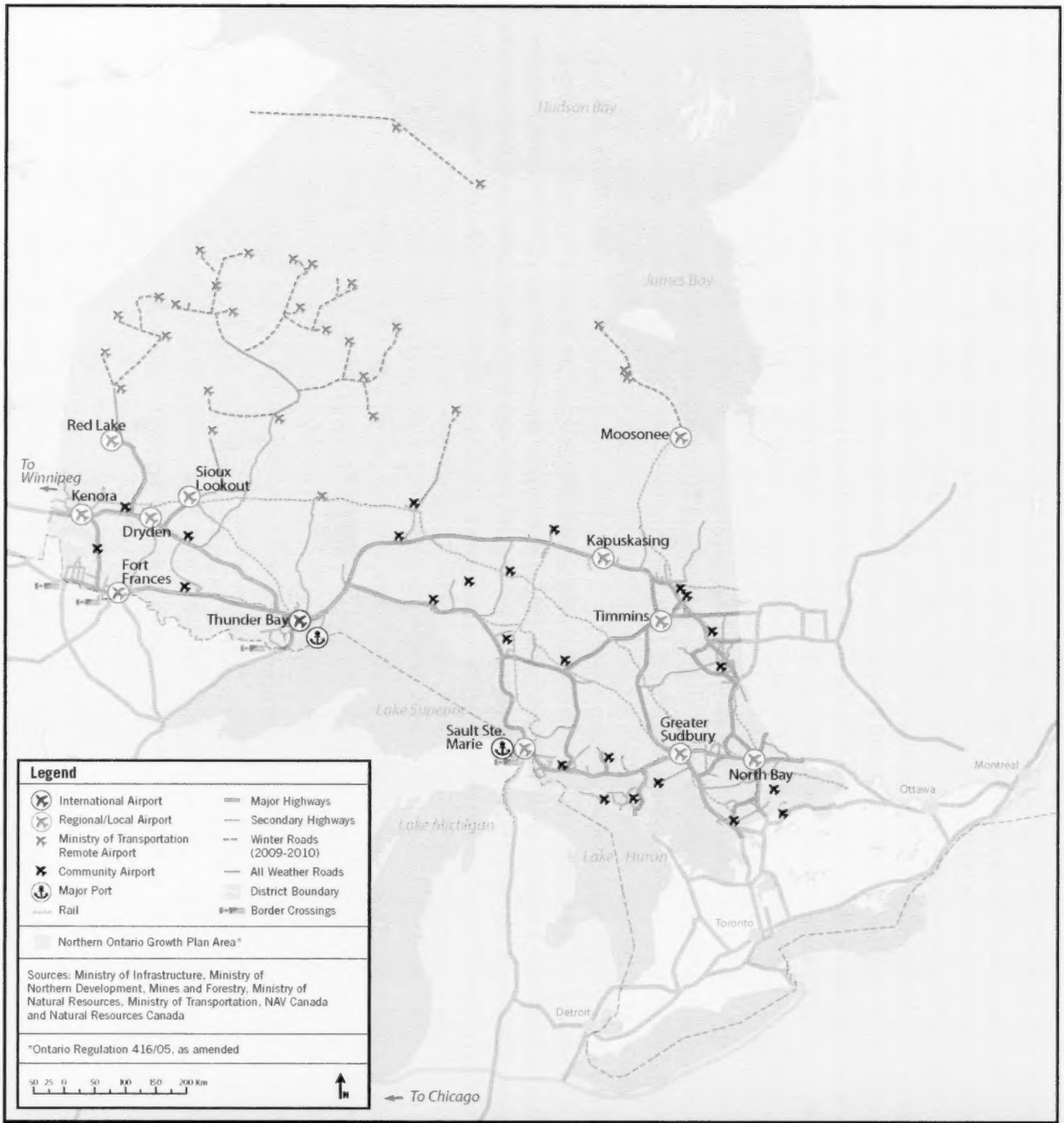

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APPENDIX 3

Transportation Network

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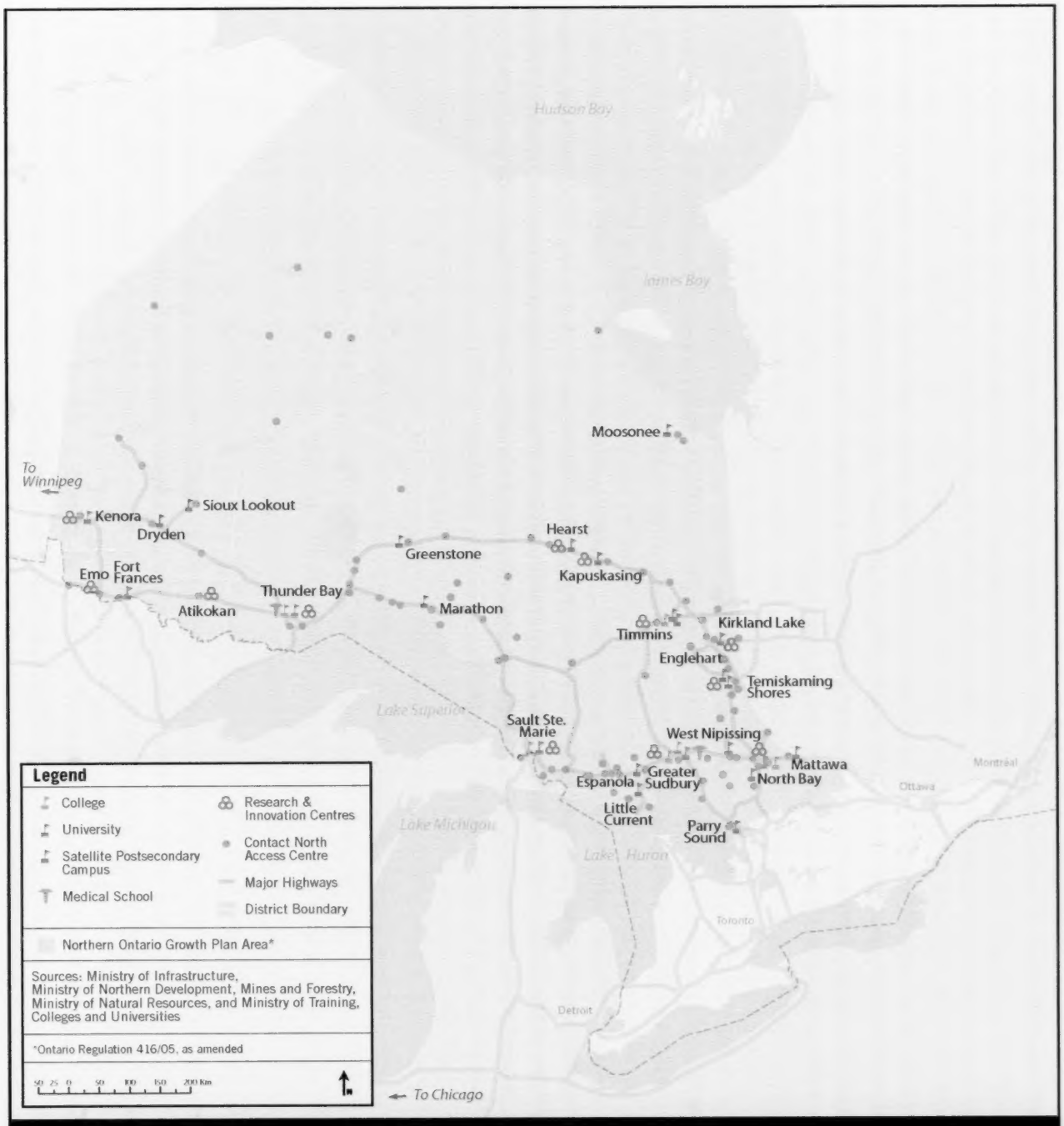

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APPENDIX 4

Research and Innovation Centres and Postsecondary Locations

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Stay Involved

Planning for growth means looking ahead together.
Stay involved in the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, 2011
by contacting:

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